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IMPROVEMENTS IN VIDEO MACHINES

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(57)

An arrangement including a controller arranged to control the delivery of a bonus prize to a player of one of a plurality of video gaming machines linked to the controller to which each of the machines is connected, each machine passing information to the controller relating to a percentage of payments into the machine or of games played on the machine, the controller including a microprocessor controlled by a programme arranged so that when a predetermined sum has been accumulated for payment as a bonus prize or a predetermined number of games have been played the controller is caused to provide a visible and/or audible indication to each player and simultaneously act to suspend any game being played on any of the machines and to impose a new game common to all machines and to award a bonus prize to the player of any machine first to achieve a predetermined objective, the controller, on payment of the bonus prize providing an indication of this to all machines and causing all machines to revert to independent games.

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AUSTRALIA

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AINSWORTH NOMINEES PTY LIMITED

ORIGINAL

**COMPLETE SPECIFICATION
PETTY PATENT**

Invention Title:

Improvements in Video Machines

The following statement is a full description of this invention including the best method of performing it known to us:-

The present invention relates to improvements in video gaming machines and more particularly to an arrangement in which a plurality of such video machines may be linked together through a controller by means of which, under specified conditions, a bonus prize can be awarded to the player of one of the video machines.

It is well known to provide a large bonus prize or jackpot from a group of linked poker or video machines in which a small percentage of each player's coin contributes to a pooled prize. The present invention provides a means of providing a bonus prize that is different from and has advantages over known methods.

The present invention consists in an arrangement including a controller arranged to control the delivery of a bonus prize to a player of one of a plurality of video gaming machines linked to the controller, the controller having means for connection thereto of each of said video gaming machines for the transmission of electrical signals between the controller and the machines and vice versa each machine being arranged to send to the controller a signal representative of a percentage of payments made by players into the machine or of games played on the machine, the controller including micro-processor/computer means, said means being controlled by a programme, the programme being arranged so that on receipt of signals from the machines serving to indicate that a predetermined sum had been accumulated for payment as a bonus prize or a predetermined number of games had been played in the machines the programme causes the controller to provide a visible and/or audible indication to each player and simultaneously acts to suspend any game being played on any of the machines and to impose a new game common to all machines and to award a bonus prize to the player of any machine first to achieve a predetermined objective, the programme thereafter causing the controller to provide an

indication on all machines that the bonus prize had been awarded and causing all machines to revert to independent games.

In order that the nature of the invention may be better understood a preferred form thereof is hereinafter described with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:-

Figure 1 is a diagram showing an arrangement of a plurality of video machines connected to a central controller;

Figure 2 shows diagrammatically the general logic of the programme accompanying the operation of the controller;

Figure 3 shows in more detail the logic of phase 1 of the programme, and

Figure 4 shows the logic of phase 2 of the programme.

Figure 1 shows an arrangement of video machines 10 connected to a common controller 11 which includes a micro-processor/computer programmed to control the operation of the controller. The particular arrangement illustrated is programmed to provide a bonus prize of \$100.00 on any player achieving a line up of three jacks on the screen of the video machine being played. The video machines are of generally conventional construction and are programmed internally to provide an input to the controller indicative of a percentage of the value of coins inserted by each player in the video machines or the number of games played on the machine. As indicated in the diagram in Figure 2, once a sufficient sum is credited in the controller from the video machines the controller causes a message to be displayed on each machine giving particulars of the bonus prize to be won and the combination required to win it. It simultaneously arrests games being played on the individual machines and imposes a secondary game screen common to all machines. The first machine to display the combination of three jacks wins the

bonus and thereafter the programme of the controller causes the individual machines to revert to their original games.

Figures 3 and 4 indicate in more detail the logic of the microprocessor and the controller. Figure 3 illustrates what might be described as phase 1 of the operation which commences when a nominated figure has been accumulated in the controller and ends when the secondary game appears on the screens of the individual machines. Phase 2 commences when the nominated line up entitling a player to win the bonus prize has been achieved and the machine concerned has been credited with the bonus prize. Phase 2 is completed by all machines being reverted to independent games.

While all machines connected to the controller must be video machines it is not necessary that all machines shall be playing the same game at the commencement of phase 1. The arrangement is very flexible in that the value of the bonus prize and the line up required to achieve it can be readily changed. A particular advantage of the arrangement is that during phase 2 all machines are playing the same game thus giving to each player the same chance of winning the bonus.

It will be appreciated by persons skilled in the art that numerous variations and/or modifications may be made to the invention as shown in the specific embodiments without departing from the spirit or scope of the invention as broadly described. The present embodiments are, therefore, to be considered in all respects as illustrative and not restrictive.

THE CLAIM DEFINING THE INVENTION IS AS FOLLOWS:-

1. An arrangement including a controller arranged to control the delivery of a bonus prize to a player of one of a plurality of video gaming machines linked to the controller, the controller having means for connection thereto of each of said video gaming machines for the transmission of electrical signals between the controller and the machines and vice versa each machine being arranged to send to the controller a signal representative of a percentage of payments made by players into the machine or of games played on the machine, the controller including micro-processor/computer means, said means being controlled by a programme, the programme being arranged so that on receipt of signals from the machines serving to indicate that a predetermined sum had been accumulated for payment as a bonus prize or a predetermined number of games had been played in the machines the programme causes the controller to provide a visible and/or audible indication to each player and simultaneously acts to suspend any game being played on any of the machines and to impose a new game common to all machines and to award a bonus prize to the player of any machine first to achieve a predetermined objective, the programme thereafter causing the controller to provide an indication on all machines that the bonus prize had been awarded and causing all machines to revert to independent games.

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ABSTRACT

An arrangement including a controller arranged to control the delivery of a bonus prize to a player of one of a plurality of video gaming machines linked to the controller to which each of the machines is connected, each machine passing information to the controller relating to a percentage of payments into the machine or of games played on the machine, the controller including a microprocessor controlled by a programme arranged so that when a predetermined sum has been accumulated for payment as a bonus prize or a predetermined number of games have been played the controller is caused to provide a visible and/or audible indication to each player and simultaneously act to suspend any game being played on any of the machines and to impose a new game common to all machines and to award a bonus prize to the player of any machine first to achieve a predetermined objective, the controller, on payment of the bonus prize providing an indication of this to all machines and causing all machines to revert to independent games.

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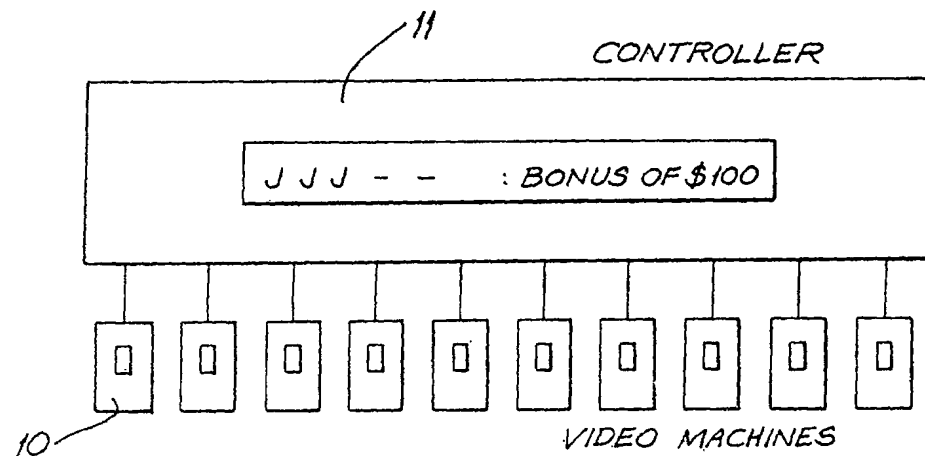


FIG. 1

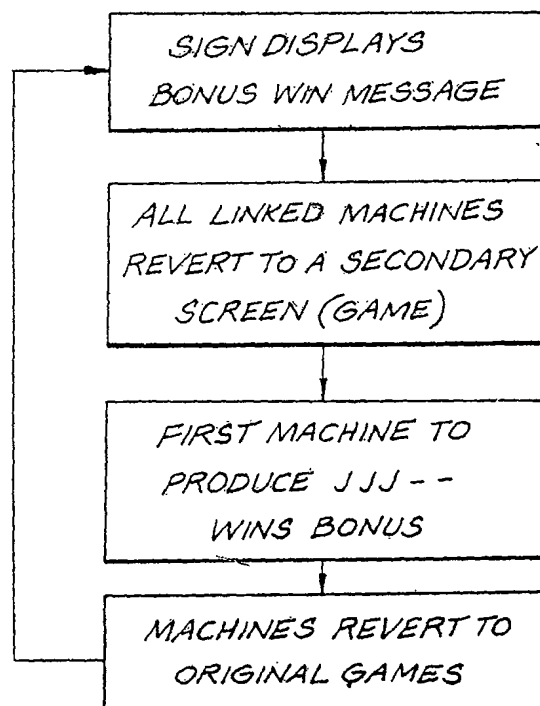


FIG. 2

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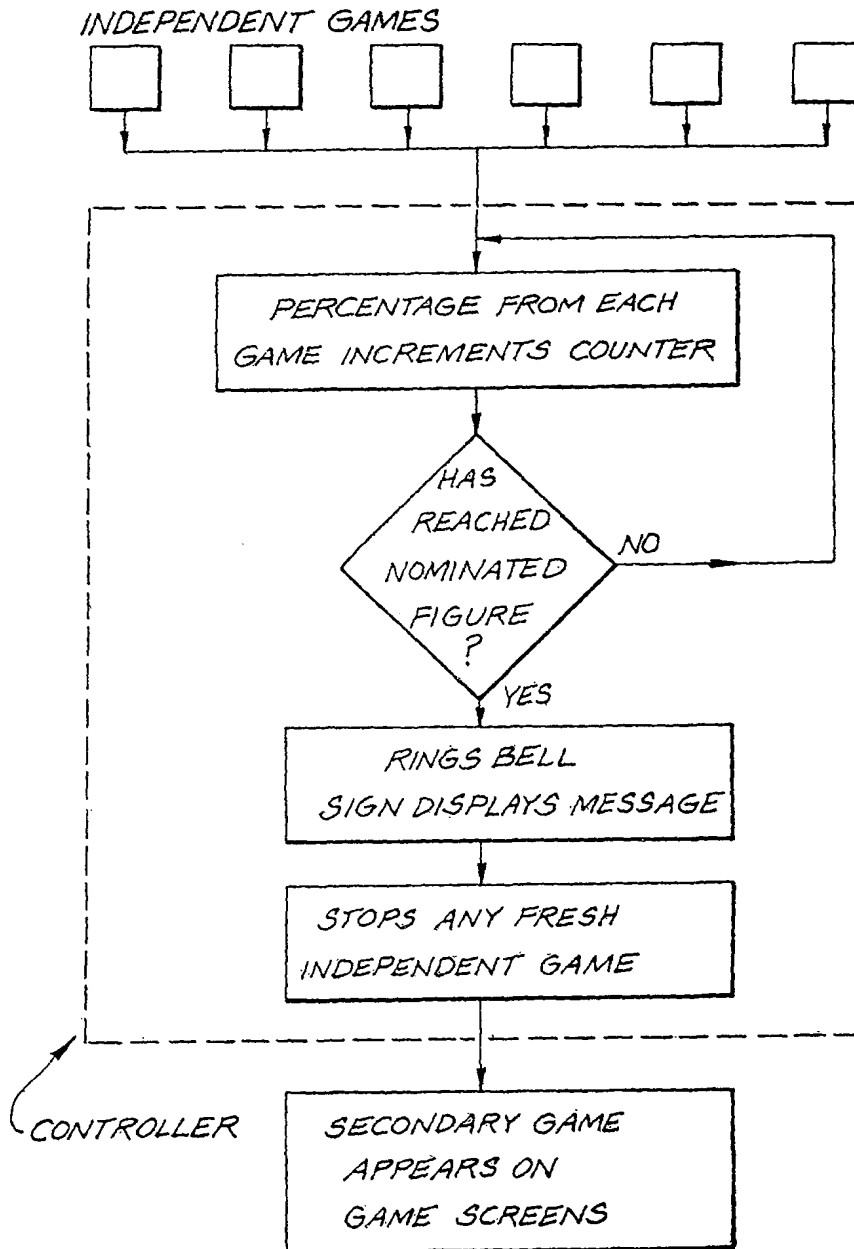


FIG. 3

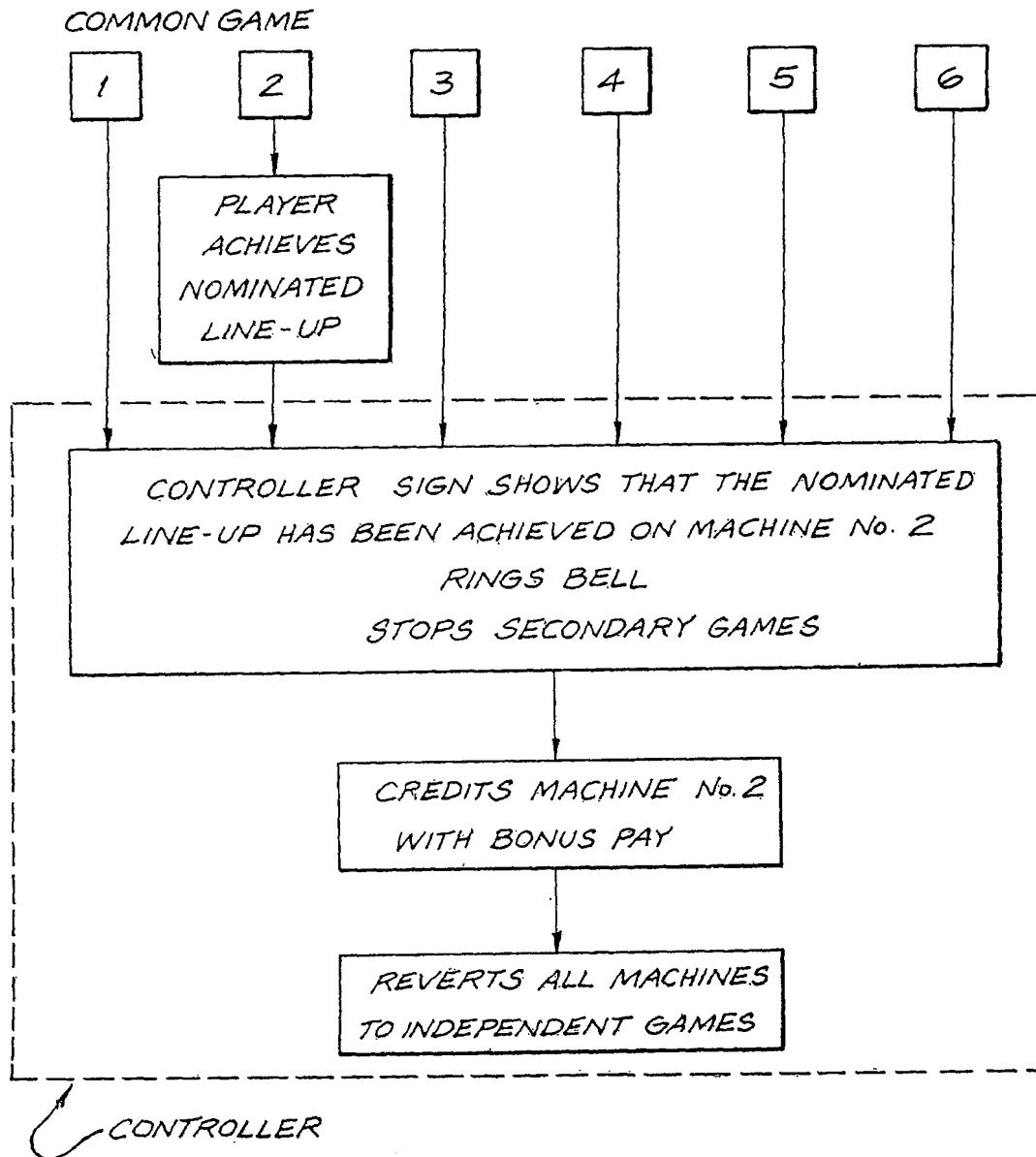


FIG. 4